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UNCLAS VATICAN 001907

SIPDIS

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FROM EMBASSY VATICAN/MESSAGE NO. 55/01

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PHUM SR CY VT

SUBJECT: VATICAN - "VIEWS FROM THE HILL"

11. THE MARCH 31 - APRIL 06 EDITION OF NEWS AND VIEWS FROM
VATICAN CITY.

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CONTENTS:

- NEW BELGRADE BISHOP WELCOMES MILOSEVIC ARREST
- POPE WILL NOT STOP IN CYPRUS DURING MAY TRAVEL
- NO CHANGES TO POPE'S EASTER WEEK SCHEDULE

ARCHBISHOP SAYS MILOSEVIC ARREST IS A "SIGN FOR FUTURE"

12. IN AN APRIL 4 INTERVIEW WITH VATICAN NEWS AGENCY
"FIDES," BELGRADE'S NEW ARCHBISHOP, STANISLAV HOCEVAR,
DEEMED THE ARREST OF FORMER PRESIDENT MILOSEVIC "A SIGN OF
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE" AND THAT "YUGOSLAVIA IS ON THE RIGHT
PATH." THE 55 YEAR-OLD HOCEVAR HAS BEEN ARCHBISHOP "IN
WAITING" FOR THE LAST 12 MONTHS AND ASSUMED FULL CONTROL FOR
THE CHURCH IN THE YUGOSLAV CAPITAL WHEN THE POPE ACCEPTED
ARCHBISHOP FRANC PERKO'S RESIGNATION FOR HEALTH REASONS ON
MARCH 31. SPEAKING TO "FIDES" HOCEVAR SAID MILOSEVIC'S
ARREST AND THE FUTURE IDENTIFICATION AND TRIAL OF GOVERNMENT
AND MILITARY OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR WAR CRIMES IN THE
BALKANS ARE ONLY PART OF THE PROCESS OF RECOVERY.

NO PAPAL TRIP TO CYPRUS FOR NOW

13. VATICAN SPOKESMAN, JOAQUIN NAVARRO-VALS, ANNOUNCED
APRIL 3 THAT POPE JOHN PAUL II WILL NOT STOP IN CYPRUS
DURING HIS UP-COMING TRAVEL TO GREECE, SYRIA AND MALTA.

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NAVARRO-VALS SAID THE POPE HAD RECEIVED AN INVITATION TO
VISIT FROM THE CYPRIOT PRESIDENT. VATICAN WATCHER THEN
SPECULATED THE POPE COULD MAKE A BRIEF STOP ENROUTE TO
GREECE. WHILE THE PONTIFF HOPES TO ACCEPT THE OFFER "ONE
DAY," NAVARRO-VALS SAID IT WAS A "TECHNICAL IMPOSSIBILITY"
TO INCLUDE A STOP ON THE ISLAND AS PART OF THE POPE'S MAY 04
- 09 TRAVEL ITINERARY.

FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR EASTER

14. THE VATICAN ANNOUNCED APRIL 4 THAT THE INCREASINGLY
FRAIL POPE JOHN PAUL II WILL PRESIDE OVER ALL OF THE VATICAN
CITY EASTER WEEK EVENTS. THE EASTER LITURGICAL CEREMONIES
ARE THE MOST DEMANDING IN THE VATICAN'S OFFICIAL CALENDAR.
THE 80 YEAR-OLD PONTIFF HAS RESUMED HIS REGULAR SCHEDULE
AFTER THE RIGORS OF THE 2000 HOLY YEAR, INCLUDING MEETINGS
WITH GROUPS OF BISHOPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND VISITS TO
ROMAN PARISHES. (NOTE: THE EASTER WEEK EVENTS ARE OFFICIAL
VATICAN CEREMONIES THAT THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IS EXPECTED TO
ATTEND. END NOTE). THE POPE IS EXPECTED TO TAKE SOME TIME
OFF AFTER EASTER AT HIS RESIDENCE IN THE HILLS OUTSIDE OF
ROME. MERANTE

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